

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

**Wildlife  
Services**

FY 2004

## WILDLIFE SERVICES—ILLINOIS

### Contact Information:

Scott Beckerman, Illinois Wildlife Services State Director

2869 Via Verde Drive

Springfield, IL 62703-4325

Phone: (217) 241-6700 FAX: (217) 241-6702

Toll-Free Number: 1-866-4USDAWS

E-mail: [Sc.Beckerman@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Sc.Beckerman@aphis.usda.gov)

Web site: [www.aphis.usda.gov/ws](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws)

## USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Illinois

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Illinois Wildlife Services (WS) for help in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and property from damage or threats posed by wildlife. WS' professional wildlife biologists and specialists respond to these requests with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

WS works to protect property and reduce human health and safety risks at airports and on public and private property. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards natural resources from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by Illinois WS include, identifying and implementing wildlife management strategies at airports around the State to reduce risks posed by wildlife to aviation safety; assisting agencies in the management of deer populations in the Chicago areas to protect public and private property, human health and safety from vehicle accidents, and to protect threatened and endangered native vegetation; and assist State agencies (Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Health) with the monitoring of wildlife diseases that may threaten public health and safety (e.g., West Nile Virus and rabies), natural resources (e.g., chronic wasting disease) and agricultural interests (e.g., pseudorabies).

## Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS also provides



### Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting airline passengers and aircraft operations from wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting public safety and property from Canada goose and white-tailed deer damage
- Protecting native vegetation and threatened and endangered species
- Protecting agricultural resources from diseases threats (e.g., chronic wasting disease, pseudorabies and West Nile virus) and other damage
- Protecting public health and safety from threats caused by diseases (e.g., West Nile virus, histoplasmosis and rabies)

### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Illinois

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation safety
- Managing bird damage to agricultural resources and public health and safety
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Controlling wildlife vectors of rabies, chronic wasting disease, and pseudorabies
- Reducing goose damage through avian infertility



on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

**Protecting Livestock**—WS works with the agricultural industry to resolve conflicts caused by wildlife, including bird damage to crops, livestock and feedlot operations. Damage is often local but can have significant impacts upon producers in these areas. Birds can completely destroy a corn crop or spread disease in feedlots, causing a significant drop in milk production in dairy cows. WS works with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and USDA's Cooperative Extension Service to identify and resolve specified conflicts.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—Wildlife strikes with aircraft cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$500 million annually and pose a hazard to flight crews and passengers. From 1992 to 2000, more than 1,600 wildlife strikes, involving various bird and mammal species, including waterfowl (Canada geese and ducks), raptors (hawks and owls) and deer, were reported to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at Illinois airports.

WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) conducts research from its Sandusky, OH field station to reduce wildlife hazards to aircraft and the public. Studies are underway at several large airports around the country to evaluate habitat management practices and wildlife dispersal techniques. NWRC also maintains the National Wildlife Strike Database used by the FAA and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species that pose the greatest concern to aviation safety.

WS biologists are working with airport officials at all major Chicago airports and regional airports around the State to manage wildlife popu-

lations in and around airfields. Strike rates caused by specific species have been greatly reduced through habitat manipulation, which makes the airports less attractive to wildlife. Additionally, more than 500 raptors have been captured and relocated anywhere from 50 to 200 miles away from Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports.

WS works with other airport managers and the Illinois Department of Transportation to assess and resolve wildlife conflicts at airports throughout the State. In addition, wildlife hazard assessments are conducted that enable airport managers to identify potential wildlife threats to aircraft safety and identify various strategies to resolve these conflicts.

**Urban Human Health and Safety Issues**—WS works with private industries throughout the State and with the Illinois Department of Public Health to alleviate disease threats to public health and safety. For example, when large concentrations of birds, such as European starlings, roost in an industrial site or residential areas, environmental conditions may be created that support the development of a fungal disease called histoplasmosis. This disease can be transmitted to people exposed to the area and can cause severe respiratory problems. WS also assists with work to monitor for additional diseases, including rabies, West Nile virus, chronic wasting disease, leptospirosis, and E. coli. As part of this effort, WS provides assistance to alleviate public exposure concerns.

**Chronic Wasting Disease Issues Management**—WS is a participant on the Illinois Chronic Wasting Disease Working Group with other State and federal agencies to develop and implement monitoring and control programs to eliminate this threat to natural and agricultural resources. WS works with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to collect samples from deer in known and potentially infected areas in northern portions of Illinois for monitoring purposes.

**Protecting Multiple Resources from Beaver Damage**—Protecting transportation, agriculture, and natural resources through beaver damage management is a growing consideration for WS in Illinois. Beaver are considered a valuable natural resource and an extremely important part of the environment. In recent years, however, little demand for beaver products has resulted in a decrease in trapping, and subsequent increase in beaver numbers. Beaver now occupy nearly all watersheds in the State. While this population escalation has resulted in some benefits derived from beaver activities, such as increased wetland habitat, reduced downstream sedimentation, and improved water quality, the detrimental impacts from beaver activities have also increased. Typical requests for assistance involved damage to roadways and bridges, agriculture and forest resources, and flooding of homes. To address some of these problems, WS works closely with the property owners or administrators to identify appropriate measures to take to resolve the conflicts in an effective and responsible manner. For instance, WS has worked with the U.S. Forest Service in southern Illinois

### Major Cooperators

- City of Chicago (O'Hare International and Midway Airports)
- U.S. Department of Energy — Argonne National Laboratory-East
- U.S. Department of Energy — Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory
- USDA Forest Service
- Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
- Lake County Forest Preserve
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Illinois Department of Transportation (Divisions of Aviation and Roads and Bridges)

to resolve a flooding problem with the use of pond levelers. These devices help to maintain the level of a beaver pond so that it minimizes the chances of flooding damage while allowing the beaver to continue using the watershed. In some situations, population management is used to minimize the damage where beaver populations are excessive.

WS occasionally uses explosives to remove beaver dams that are flooding property. Before using explosives, Illinois WS personnel are trained and certified in the safe and effective use and storage of explosives.

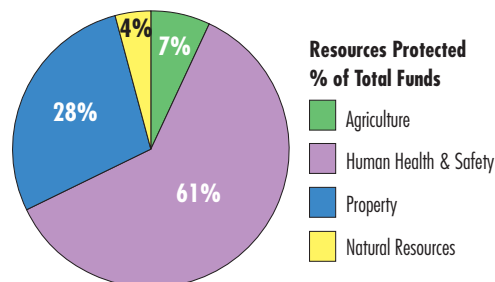
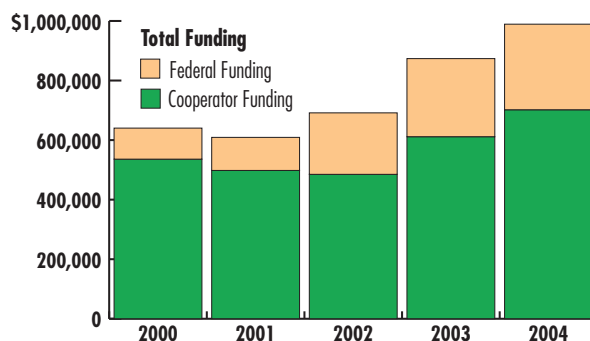
## Looking to the Future

The scope of wildlife damage issues within Illinois continue to grow. One emerging conflict of great concern to producers in the State involves fish-eating birds causing damage and losses at fish-production facilities. Aquaculture is a new and emerging industry in Illinois. In addition to raising fish as an agricultural commodity, these facilities are also replenishing natural resources by raising stock fish for release in Illinois waters.

Wildlife diseases that are transmissible to humans and livestock are also a growing concern in Illinois. Diseases, such as West Nile virus and chronic wasting disease, have been receiving national attention and could impact public safety and agricultural production within Illinois. With the State being situated in a major migratory bird flyway, the Illinois Department of Public Health has requested assistance from WS in monitoring for potential diseases carried by these birds. Diseases spread from wildlife to livestock are already having an impact on the agricultural industries of nearby States and could cause similar concerns in Illinois.

## Illinois Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators, such as producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. These cooperators have sought assistance with the resolution of their wildlife-related conflict because of the effective and professional assistance provided by Wildlife Services personnel.



USDA is an equal employment provider and employer.